

REMARKS

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that the drawings filed on February 22, 2006 have been accepted.

Allowable Subject Matter

Applicant thanks the Examiner for the indication that claim 8 contains patentable subject matter and will be allowable if rewritten in independent for including all the limitations of the base claim and intervening claims. Claim 8 has been rewritten as suggested by the Examiner to include the limitations of canceled claims 1, 2 and 6. As indicated by the Examiner, rewritten claim 8 contains patentable subject matter and is therefore patentable over the prior art.

Claim Rejections

Claims 1, 7 and 9 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as allegedly being anticipated by Australian Patent No. AU 735582 to Strat et al. ("Strat"). Applicants have canceled claim 1 without prejudice or disclaimer to filing in a future application. Independent claims 7 and 9 have been amended to incorporate the patentable subject matter of claim 8 and are therefore patentable over the prior art.

Claim 2 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Strat in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,609,003 to Park et al. ("Park"). Applicants have canceled claim 2 without prejudice or disclaimer to filing in a future application.

Claims 3-5 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Strat in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,480,483 to Yahata et al. ("Yahata"). The combination of Strat and Yahata does not disclose or suggest the invention as claimed in amended claims 3 and

4. Claims 3 and 4 have been amended to depend from amended independent claim 8.

Dependent claim 5 depends from claim 8 through claim 3. Since independent claim 8 is patentable over Strat, and since Yahata does not cure the deficiencies of Strat, these claims are patentable over the combined references at least by virtue of their dependencies.

Claim 6 has been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as allegedly being unpatentable over Strat in view of Park, and in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,872,204 to Hammer et al. ("Hammer"). Applicants have canceled claim 6 without prejudice or disclaimer to filing in a future application.

Conclusion

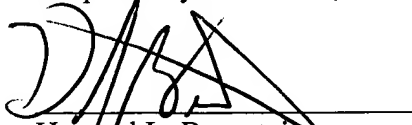
In view of the above, reconsideration and allowance of this application are now believed to be in order, and such actions are hereby solicited. If any points remain in issue which the Examiner feels may be best resolved through a personal or telephone interview, the Examiner is kindly requested to contact the undersigned at the telephone number listed below.

Amendment Under 37 C.F.R. § 1.116
U.S. Application No. 09/781,250

Atty docket No. Q78918

The USPTO is directed and authorized to charge all required fees, except for the Issue Fee and the Publication Fee, to Deposit Account No. 19-4880. Please also credit any overpayments to said Deposit Account.

Respectfully submitted,


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